(b) Thermal Power Plants in the country comprise units ranging from 30 MW commissioned in Sixties to 500 MW units of latest design. Some of the older units, however, require attention in terms of maintenance and replacement of the worn out parts and also life extension programme to improve their performance. The 200 MW and 500 MW units are running efficiently and giving satisfactory service.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Government of India having recognised the importance of R&M way back in 1984, launched a programme (Phase-I R&M) comprising 34 thermal power stations covering 163 units in the country, resulting in an additional generation of about 10,000 MUs annum. Phase-II R&M covering 44 stations with 198 units has been taken up for implementation. However, the programme could not progress as per schedule mainly because of paucity of resources with the SEBs. In view of the poor financial health of most of the SEBs, the Government has proposed a special scheme called Accelerated Power Development Programme (APDP) starting from 1.4.2000 under which additional Central Plan Assistance would be provided to SEBs for undertaking *inter-alia* R&M and Life Extension of existing old and inefficient plants and also for strengthening of sub-transmission and distribution system. The modalities of funding (combination of grant and loan) and for implementation of the scheme are being finalised by the Planning Commission.

Power Finance Corporation is also providing loan assistance to SEBs for R&M of existing power stations.

Subsidy to power sector

5591. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government continue to subsidise the power sector to the tune of Rs.22,346.3 crores in 2000-2001 inspite of the fact that the cost of power has almost doubled and there has been increase in consumption in the last few years; and

(b) if so, the future plans of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) As per Section 59 of Electricity (Supply) Act, the tariff to different categories of consumers is to be decided by State Electricity Board in consultation with the concerned State Government and the Central Government has no role to pay in this regard including

that for provision of subsidies. The total amount of RE subsidy and grants as provided in the Annual Accounts of 16 SEBs for the year 1997-98 is Rs.10,026.10 crores.

(b) The Central Government has enacted Electricity Regulatory Commission Act, 1998 which *inter-alia*, provides for establishment of Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) at the national level and State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERCs) at the state level with a view to *inter-alia* rationalise the electricity tariff. The Act also provides that if a State Government requires grant of a subsidy to a class of consumers, it would be required to pay the amount involved in such manner as directed by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission.

Conservation of energy

5592. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that conservation of energy is an important factor of national policy as it has great potential to reduce the shortage of power in the country, but it has not been adequately discriminated; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to implement such a programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) and (b) The efficient use of energy and its conservation, being the least cost option for reducing the gap between demand and supply and environmental pollution, is an important component of National Policy. Energy Conservation has been on the Government's agenda for over two decades. Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) was set up in 1976, Energy Conservation Cell was set up in the Ministry of Power in 1985 and Energy Management Centre (EMC) was set up in 1989 and acts as a focal point for all energy efficiency related activities and implementing schemes on energy efficiency and its conservation. The agencies engaged in the area of energy conservation are carrying out energy conservation programmes in almost all States and UTs.

The Government has introduced the Energy Conservation Bill, 2000 in the Lok Sabha on 24.2.2000. It *inter- alia* provides for the establishment of Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), laying down standards and norms on energy consumption for specified equipments and appliances, introducing compulsory labelling for equipments and appliances and making energy audit